

12. The keypad of claim 1, wherein a plurality of said keys provide at least four direct functions per key.

13. The keypad of claim 1, wherein a majority of said keys provide exactly four direct functions per key.

14. The keypad of claim 1, wherein said processor is selectively operable in a single-function mode wherein said processor selects a single function on contact with a given one of said keys independent of said direction of motion.

15. The keypad of claim 1, wherein said plurality of keys includes a twelve-key telephone-type alphanumeric keypad, wherein each key corresponding to a digit in the range 2-9 is associated with three letters, and wherein the letter "s" is associate with a key corresponding to "\*" and the letter "z" is associated with a key corresponding to "#".

16. The keypad of claim 15, wherein the letters "s" and "z" are selected by contact with the key corresponding to "\*" and "#", respectively, followed by movement in a generally upward direction of motion.

17. The keypad of claim 15, wherein said plurality of keys further includes a row of keys associated with at least the functions ENTER, SPACE and DELETE.

18. A method for designating functions on a multifunction keypad defined by a plurality of regions on a touch-sensitive surface, each region being designated as a key, the method comprising:

- (a) identifying a contact location at which an object comes into contact with the touch-sensitive surface,
- (b) determining a selected key corresponding to the region within which the contact location is located,
- (c) identifying a direction of motion of the object across the touch-sensitive surface relative to the contact location, and
- (d) selecting in a manner conditional upon at least said direction of motion one of a plurality of functions associated with the selected key.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein said touch-sensitive surface is a touch-sensitive display screen.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein a first of said plurality of functions is selected if said direction of motion falls within a first range of angles and a second of said plurality of functions is selected if said direction of motion falls within a second range of angles non-overlapping with said first range of angles.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein none of said plurality of functions is selected if said direction of motion falls within a third range of angles interposed between said first range of angles and said second range of angles.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein said first range of angles is greater than said second range of angles.

23. The method of claim 18, further comprising determining a length of motion of the object across said touch-sensitive surface relative to said contact location.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein a first of said plurality of functions is selected if said length of motion falls within a first range of lengths in a given direction and a second of said plurality of functions is selected if said length of motion falls within a second range of lengths in said given direction.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein a length of motion below a given value is identified as a touch-and-release condition.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein none of said plurality of functions is selected on occurrence of a touch-and-release condition.

27. The method of claim 25, wherein a first of said plurality of functions is selected if said direction of motion falls within a first range of angles, and wherein said first function is additionally selected on occurrence of a touch-and-release condition.

28. The method of claim 25, wherein one of said plurality of functions is selected exclusively on occurrence of a touch-and-release condition.

29. The method of claim 18, wherein at least four direct functions are associated with each of a plurality of said keys.

30. The method of claim 18, wherein exactly four direct functions are associated with each of a majority of said keys.

31. The method of claim 18, further comprising selectively operating said keypad in a single-function mode wherein a single function is selected on contact with a given one of said keys independent of said direction of motion.

32. A keypad comprising a twelve-key telephone-type alphanumeric keypad, wherein each key is a multifunction key configured for single-contact selection of one of four functions, and wherein each key corresponding to a digit in the range 2-9 is associated with three letters, and wherein the letter "s" is associate with a key corresponding to "\*" and the letter "z" is associated with a key corresponding to "#".

33. The keypad of claim 32, wherein the letters "s" and "z" are selected by contact with the key corresponding to "\*" and "#", respectively, in conjunction with a generally upward movement.

34. The keypad of claim 32, wherein said plurality of keys further includes a row of keys associated with at least the functions ENTER, SPACE and DELETE.

35. A multifunction keypad comprising:

- (a) a touch-sensitive surface having defined thereon a plurality of regions designated as keys; and
- (b) a processor associated with said touch-sensitive surface and configured to:
  - (i) identify a contact location at which an object comes into contact with said touch-sensitive surface,
  - (ii) determine a selected one of said keys corresponding to the one of said regions within which said contact location is located,
  - (iii) identify a path of motion of the object across said touch-sensitive surface relative to said contact location, and
  - (iv) select, in a manner conditional upon at least one parameter of said path of motion, one of a plurality of functions associated with said selected key.

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